

insights

A parenting for independence audit

by Michael Grose



Following the release of my book *Spoonfed Generation*, many parents have asked me for some benchmarks so they can assess independence building in their family.

This is a somewhat difficult task as parenting is subjective: every child is different and every parent's personal circumstances are different. However, it's also good to have benchmarks so I created the following audit to help you assess how effectively your parenting is aimed at setting your kids up for independence.

Give yourself a score from 0 (not at all) to 10 (extensively) on the following eight questions.

1. Do you insist that your children do self-help tasks themselves on a daily basis. (*Self-help tasks refer to age-relevant everyday jobs such as feeding themselves, making their own beds, making their own school lunches, asking a coach for assistance.*)
2. How much do you expect your children to help at home without being paid?
3. How much opportunity do you give your kids to organise their own lives and take responsibility for the consequences, free from constant reminders and rescuing when they muck up?
4. Do you provide opportunities for your children to expand their horizons and take positive risks? (*Positive risk-taking includes navigating their neighbourhood, walking to school, taking public transport and going to friend's houses.*)
5. How much do you allow your children to make their own decisions about the issues that affect them such as choices of clothing, hobbies and friendships?



6. Do you encourage your children to keep themselves occupied? How good are your kids at keeping themselves occupied rather than relying on you to amuse them or spend time with them?
7. Do your children cooperate and behave well without constant reminders; do they generally behave well independent of you? (*Score higher for never having to remind them.*)

8. Are your children well organised or do they need constant reminders for every day activities such as taking things to school, remembering special days and organising themselves? (Score higher for being well organised.)

Score:

75-80: Wow! Your kids will be out of your hair before you know it.

65-74: Well done. This is a good 'normal' level.

55-64: You/they may have an area or two to pick up on.

45-54: Hmm! You're kids could lift their game a little.

0-44: Let's say there's plenty of room for improvement. Pick one area to work on at a time.

How did you go? Did you score higher on some questions than others? Would you score differently for different children? If so, that's quite natural as parenting is rarely even across the family as we tend to adjust our expectations to suit different kids.

This audit gives an insight into the different aspects of independence and self-sufficiency that I discuss in my book *Spoonfed Generation*.

Spoonfed Generation: How to raise independent kids: 1. self-help, 2. helping others, 3. responsibility, 4. expanding horizons, 5. autonomy, 6. self-occupier, 7. self-discipline and 8. self-organisation.

You can get your copy at our bookstore now. <https://www.parentingideas.com.au/product/spoonfed-generation/>



Michael Grose

Michael Grose, founder of Parenting Ideas, is one of Australia's leading parenting educators. He's the author of 10 books for parents including *Thriving!* and the best-selling *Why First Borns Rule the World* and *Last Borns Want to Change It*, and his latest release *Spoonfed Generation: How to raise independent children*.